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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of African-American preadolescent children attending Saturday programs on African heritage and history offered at a African-American heritage center located in their neighborhood. In the first year, the study planned, designed, and implemented the program on a trial basis at a local community center. The second year saw a modified implementation of the program. Children and staff were interviewed at the end of each year, and participant observation proceeded throughout the 2 years. Each year about 50 elementary school-age students were registered, with about 30 in regular attendance. Assessments of participants and control groups of non-participants at the end of years one and two indicated that attending the program increased knowledge of Africa, positive attitudes about Africa, and preferences for African and African-American materials in the school curriculum. Attendance was unrelated to the children's self-evaluations of their performance of the student role identity after year one and only weakly related to their school achievement test scores after year two. These results are interpreted in the context of three heuristic models of how supplementary education programs can raise the equational outcomes for at-risk youth, developing ethnic identity, student role identity, and academic interest. (Contains 38 references.) (Author/JB)

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Supplementary Education for Low-Income Youth: Saturday School at an African American Heritage Center

by

William R. Morgan & Sandra Ezekiel

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Abstract

African-American preadolescent children attended Saturday programs on African heritage and history offered at an African-American heritage center located in their neighborhood. Assessments of participants and control groups of nonparticipants at the end of years one and two indicated that attending the program increased knowledge of Africa, positive attitudes about Africa, and preferences for African and African-American materials in the school curriculum. Attendance was unrelated to the children's self-evaluations of their performance of the student role identity after year one and only weakly related to their school achievement test scores after year two. These results are interpreted in the context of three heuristic models of how supplementary education programs can raise the educational outcomes for at-risk youth—developing ethnic identity, student role identity, and academic interest.

We report a two-year experiment to provide appropriate supplementary education to preadolescent African-American children living in a poor neighborhood of a large midwestern metropolitan area. This high-crime, poverty neighborhood put the children "at risk" of not maturing into responsible adulthood by the conventional standards of this new label for social disadvantage. The supplementary education consisted of free, voluntary classes held on Saturday mornings during the school year. The program site was an aged library building that had been converted by community and neighborhood volunteers some years earlier to an African-American cultural center. The Saturday curriculum stressed lessons and activities that gave knowledge of the history and heritage of Africa. It was hoped that such a program would sow the seeds for a more African-centered, bicultural or multicultural world view and provide specific African content for a positive, culture-based ethnic identity. Assuming necessary organizational factors could be put in place, we hypothesized these educational outcomes would have a positive effect on the children's regular school achievement.

Before describing the experiment and reporting our mixed results on its effectiveness, we shall examine the concept of supplementary education, the rationale for an ethnic curriculum, and three hypothesized process models by which such programs could boost regular school achievement.

Supplementary Education

Researchers identified with the compensatory education movement of the 1960s and 1970s examined in detail the educational resources associated with favored social class position. They then sought to devise alternative mechanisms for delivering these resources to "socially disadvantaged" children. A representative example is Strodtbeck's (1967) analysis of empowering qualities of democratic family interaction which he referred to as the "hidden curriculum of the middle class home" and his subsequent experiments with student governance in several inner-city high schools. However insightful these efforts, a cursory scanning of the persisting inequalities in educational achievement suggests little has been accomplished with these efforts.

Many have ascribed these apparent failures to improper implementation of sound concepts. They advocate greater use of private schools and private contractors as a

solution to the administrative inefficiencies of urban public school systems (Coleman, 1981, 1991). "Choice" programs that would shift school populations to centers of learning with success records are looked upon as the most viable alternative to the multitude of failed inner city compensatory education programs.

Alternatively, Dryfoos (1990) has proposed that future program efforts should be informed by a careful analysis of "what works." She reviewed extensive evaluation research on the thousands of youth programs aimed at preventing the high-risk behaviors of educational failure and dropping out, adolescent pregnancy, substance abuse, and delinquency. The 11 critical factors that she found were common across 100 successful programs ranging from intensive individualized attention to community-wide multi-agency collaboration. She advocated investing resources in programs that have these requisite characteristics. Notably the issue of public versus private control was not a key issue.

These concrete proposals for the effective delivery of services for at-risk youth represent a major operational improvement over past programs. Just as importantly, however, we believe a new substantive orientation must be clearly enunciated that will provide the guiding vision for the programs being developed for the '90s. In short, the assumption of a cultural deficit that has stigmatized the target population for the compensatory education movement must give way to the new challenge of promoting cultural diversity. The cultural enrichment opportunities provided by volunteer-staffed supplementary education have disproportionately benefited middle-class children. A neglected component in the realization of equality of educational opportunity is the accessibility of similar supplementary programs to low-income, at-risk youth, irrespective of their public or private sponsorship or location. Critical to this argument is our ensuing definition of supplementary education as an alternative to compensatory education, and the plausibility of our hypothesized causal relationship between cultural enrichment and school achievement.

Supplementary education, simply defined, is any structured, adult-supervised learning experience that is not part of a child's regular academic schooling. Supplementary education programs are broadly accessible in our society, but primarily to suburban, middle class, preadolescent youth. The form and content of such programs runs the

gamut from organized sport and recreation in which cognitive learning is but a byproduct of mastering the physical activity, to enrichment programs where specific cultural, ethnic or religious knowledge is instilled in youth. Such programs usually occur on weekends, summers, evenings, or at the end of the school day. The programs are adult-directed and sponsored by a broad variety of community organizations—religious institutions and ethnic societies, men's and women's service organizations, museums, orchestras, and schools.

These organized activities for children have increased in prevalence over the years, to the point where many middle class children now run the risk of having almost no free time during their waking hours. A key benefit from participation in such diverse programs is that youth receive an opportunity to begin to "be different," to have a unique set of interests that set them apart from classmates who are, otherwise, all exposed to the common, standardized regimen of the public school classroom. The participating youth develop a set of interests that provide a unique cultural preparation and orientation to their common school experience.

Supplementary education programs are therefore an important component in the set of social background factors that have been found to boost early school achievement. The processes and mechanisms by which this boost operates are complex, and will not be specified in detail here. Such factors include increases in student, parent and teacher learning expectations, academic motivation, intellectual curiosity, and cultural values and identity, all of which help the child engage in the schooling experience and overcome inevitable assaults on childhood playfulness, esteem, and sensibility.

The socialization that occurs in supplementary education programs is age-graded and, once American middle class youth become teenagers, they increasingly spend their nonschool time in part-time employment, informal peer-segregated activity, and school-sponsored extracurricular programs. The abandoned childhood programs, however, will have provided guidelines and experience for acceptable patterns of behavior in these more autonomous pursuits.

For youth from low-income families supplementary education usually takes on a qualitatively different social definition—compensatory education. In part because of the

need to justify their public funding and private foundation support, programs for children of low-income families usually are intended to ameliorate some identifiable deficit in the child's social background, rather than simply provide the customary cultural enrichment, fun, or recreation available to middle class children. Unwittingly, participation in such programs and the acronyms by which they are known sometimes can reify a child's sense of low position in society and the corollary expectation of low school achievement. Quite apart from program content, the very act of meeting the eligibility requirement for enrollment in such programs reinforces in these children their emerging feelings of inferiority and disadvantage. To the extent such labelling tendencies operate, compensatory programs will be less successful in providing the "boost" believed to be so important in helping their middle class peers find a niche in the common school experience.

Might an enrichment program not also be of benefit to children in low-income neighborhoods? While deficit-reduction programs might appear to be more responsive to their societally defined needs, enrichment programs should be no more luxury goods for these children than for others. The plan of our study therefore was to make available a middle-class style supplementary education experience to low-income children and then monitor and evaluate its operation and impact. In particular we were interested in Afrocentric education (Asante 1980; 1990), a cultural enrichment program of growing importance for middle class African American children.

Centers of African Heritage Education

The promotion of cultural pluralism as an important collective value in American society has given all citizens a new social right—the right to lay claim to a positive ethnic identity that is universally accepted, regardless of one's position in the prevailing ethnic hierarchy of society. This contrasts with the more established American right to reject ethnic ancestry as having any bearing on one's identity as an individual citizen. As Waters (1988) has pointed out, most Americans of European origin have freedom and choice in their preferred ethnic identities, given the multiple ethnic memberships most can

lay claim to. One or another of several ethnic identities may be invoked depending on their strategic value in a particular social encounter. In general, Waters argued that having access to such identities provides at once a symbolic communal allegiance and a sense of one's uniqueness, especially important for third generation and later ethnics now living in homogeneous suburban environments.

For individual African Americans the promise of cultural pluralism has been much less liberating than for the white suburbanites in Waters' study. Their identity choices are restricted. One can be more or less African American depending on the social occasion, but the decision to be "less" ethnic can in itself be a devaluation of self; the decision to be "more" is a risky affirmation that may create ambivalence or hostility in one's white ethnic work associates or neighbors.

Even though most African Americans have European ancestry as well, few have access to the varied ethnic options this would theoretically permit. The heritage of American slavery is such that skin pigmentation has remained a cultural "mark of oppression" (Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951) in our society. Unlike other ethnic groups, African ancestry is nearly always denoted by the presence of pigmentation rather than distinctive cultural forms and symbols, thereby perpetuating its meaning as the "mark of oppression" and the racist implication of its bearers' inferiority.

The harsh reality is that ethnic stratification remains a basic component in the social structure and symbol systems of American and most other modern societies (Berreman, 1972)—some ethnic identities continue to receive more or less social value than others, as measured by conventional social distance scales, as experienced through degrees of ethnic prejudice and discrimination, and as asserted by prevailing definitions of whose culture has the most educational value. Consequently minority citizens whose ethnicity has traditionally been undervalued often rudely discover that their new positive ethnic identity assertions are subject to challenge and are even seen by some as revolutionary to the symbolic social order. Efforts to claim a unique and positive ethnic identity beyond common American citizenship expose minority group members to possible social denial, a reminder of existing ethnic prejudice that can be very unsettling, particularly to those individuals who have achieved middle-class economic prosperity.

Many African-American groups are now seeking active methods to fight racism through promotion of a new and more universally validated African-American ethnic identity. Moving well beyond the black pride movements of the 1970s, centers of study have arisen to disseminate knowledge of African history and heritage that can replace the more recent negative heritage of slavery, the continuing racist use of skin color as the principal defining characteristic of African ancestry, and beliefs that the only worthwhile culture originated from European ethnic groups. Most major American cities now have one or more African-American museums or cultural centers, many of which are publicly funded. The shift to African American as the preferred ethnic name, successively preceded as it was in this century by the terms colored, Negro, and black, points to the growing societal impact of this movement and its geocultural significance.

The appropriate content for these centers and museums varies depending on the board members, curators, donors, program directors and other controlling influences at each site. What is appropriate, what is accurate, and what should have priority for a rediscovered heritage can often be hotly disputed. A partial list of topic areas includes information and artifacts from classical African civilizations, including ancient Egypt (Kemet); arts and crafts as well as music, dance, and folklore from traditional, colonial, and modern African cultures; American slave culture and history; Southern rural culture and food; African-American music traditions (jazz, blues, soul, gospel, rap); early and contemporary African-American political and social activists; and famous African-American contributors to different sectors of mainstream American society.

Similarly there is substantial variation and internal disagreement over program priorities in these new centers. Varying emphasis is placed on programs for African-American children, for African-American adults, for the schools, and for the general public. Then there are issues of the general tone and appearance of the museum, with some wanting a traditional professional look of high-culture America and others preferring a community or "people's" museum. From the ongoing local debates over these various issues a new collective self-definition is emerging; one can anticipate that the multiple forms of this emergent African-American institution may be as varied as those that collectively represent the contemporary black church. Their common denominator is a commitment to showcasing that which is perceived to be uniquely African-American.

The site of our experimental program was one of these locations. While our presence as university researchers and educators presented new issues for the ongoing debate at the center, our formal research design assessed the program's impact only on the participating children.

Hypothesized Program Effects

Three broad hypotheses guided our thinking about how exposure to a supplementary education program at a center for African-American heritage could have an immediate positive effect on regular school achievement—establishing a positive ethnic identity, developing student role identity, and arousing academic interest. Although we could not measure it, we further hypothesized that these three mechanisms would act as an "inoculation" against the ensuing counterinfluences of the neighborhood street culture.

Ethnic Identity Effects

The motto of the Saturday school, as imprinted on the official T-shirts awarded students at the graduation ceremony, was "when you know your history you know your greatness." This simple idea about the personal value of knowing one's ethnic heritage and more generally of having a positive group identity has been the subject of a long tradition of controversial academic research. Even the numerous reviews of this literature as it pertains to children's ethnic socialization (Baldwin, Brown, & Hopkins, 1991; Cross, 1991; Gordon, 1972; Grambs, 1972; Harrison, 1985; McAdoo, 1985; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990) tend to arrive at different conclusions.

Its origins have been attributed (Cross, 1991) to one of modern social psychology's founders, Kurt Lewin. Lewin's theoretical essay on the "psycho-sociological problems of a minority group" (1935) explained the paradoxical case of social strain increasing for individual minority group members (German Jews) at the very time when social boundaries and societal restrictions for the group as a whole were diminishing—the early phase of structural assimilation. Unfortunately the early empirical work of Horowitz (1939) and Clark and Clark (1939) on racial preferences of nursery school children, in particular the

latter's finding that segregated Negro children preferred white dolls, lent credence to the more simplistic "Negro self-hatred" thesis. A child's early racial identification, as measured by color preferences for playmate photographs or dolls, was assumed to directly affect later ethnic self-evaluations. Any nonblack choices by children were seen as evidence of the beginnings of ethnic identity rejection. From a Lewinian perspective one could argue this was merely an expression of initial interest in participating in a multi-ethnic, integrated society.

The Clarks' legal brief for the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision on school segregation went a step further and asserted that continuing racial isolation was a key factor in the imputed negative racial identities of these children. This seemingly brought the argument full circle from Lewin's original argument that individual ethnic identity problems were more common under societal conditions of assimilation.

Tajfel's social identity theory (1982) provided a partial resolution to this seeming inconsistency. Each person's self-image is a joint product of personal identity characteristics and various group identities. A positive self-image represents the net result of the evaluations of these separate elements. Given most people's desire for a positive self-image, all other things being equal, Tajfel found (using controlled laboratory settings) that individuals assign higher value to the groups they belong to than the groups they don't. Of course in everyday life all other things are not equal. Nearly all societies have a developmental history of intergroup conflict, competition, and exploitation that has resulted in a prevailing structure of ethnic stratification. Given that the less powerful minority groups find themselves lower on the social ladder, the corresponding ethnic identity carries lower social value and privilege for individuals as well.

Educational programs that promote positive ethnic group consciousness are a viable mechanism for altering this social condition. Tajfel argued that creating a shared feeling that one's ethnic identity is undervalued is a necessary precondition for collective social action that acts upon this felt injustice. Marx (1969) found a strong relation between knowledge of Negro culture and civil rights militancy in the 1960s.

It follows that new positive group identity definitions stabilize to the degree that meaningful change in the current social order does occur. For preadolescent children

beginning to look ahead, this change translates at a social psychological level to the belief in equal opportunity. Pride and promise must be coupled in the same educational message. Increased ethnic identity awareness can thus create the vision of collective social progress. This sense of group destiny, when reinforced in the appropriate school context, can be a powerful source of individual achievement motivation for individuals from a currently undervalued group.

Ethnic Definitions of the Student Role Identity

From the perspective of structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980), a child's evaluations of his or her personal and group identities represent the reflected appraisals of significant others, such as parents, siblings, teachers, and peers. Where each personal identity (student, friend, child, etc.) corresponds to a set of expected role activities, overall self-esteem depends on the self-evaluations of one's performance in each of those role-activities. Activities judged by self and others to be more important carry more weight in the overall self-evaluation. Conversely, assuming again the universal striving for a positive self-image, the child tends to perform better in those role-activities most important for overall self-esteem, and also to assign more importance to the activities that will win positive appraisals.

Learning a positive ethnic identity should help the minority child in developing and performing the student and related role identities. This is because it is part of a child's ethnic socialization not simply to learn the overall status value of one's group, but also, in many cases, the specific performance expectations associated with a given role activity for persons of one's group. Therefore it should help a minority child to reject any negative definition of one's ethnic group, particularly as it may be held by significant others whose interaction with the child is in part premised on that definition. For example, middle class school teachers' expectations for at-risk minority children have been found repeatedly (reviewed in Dusek, 1975; Braun, 1976) to be low, even when the teachers are African Americans (Grambs, 1964).

It follows that children should perform better in the student role if they receive supplementary education that develops self-expectations that African Americans are an ethnic group that can perform well in that role, and closely related, that performance in the student role is important for one's overall self-evaluation.

Cultural Enrichment, Academic Interest, and School Commitment

While it is a highly complex set of political and professional realities that enter into the curriculum development of the public schools, a guiding principle is that children should learn what society considers important for them to know. Therefore, if the "knowledge most worth having" includes social history and literature that portrays one's own ethnic heritage, that is a key signal to minority children that their ethnic identity is indeed valued by society and, more specifically, by their school and their teachers. This particularized academic interest helps create a sense of belonging and of ownership. A multicultural society that requires a multicultural curriculum in the public schools is therefore more likely to generate a multiethnic commitment to school achievement.

Supplementary education about one's own ethnic culture at a site away from school should be crucial in arousing this academic interest. The constraints of the school day limit the amount of information and the number of ethnic heritages which can be adequately presented to students. Efforts at multicultural enrichment and appreciation may come across merely as shallow cultural dilution, with unintended negative consequences for children's ethnic group identities. The availability of supplementary education, particularly for those ethnic heritages whose position in the regular curriculum is only weakly established, should help to offset any weaknesses in the public school offering. When that brief offering does occur as part of the regular curriculum, children in possession of additional cultural information potentially take on added value in the classroom as learning resources for their teacher and classmates. Therefore, gaining outside knowledge about African culture, if it is drawn upon actively by the regular school teachers, might increase school performance of at-risk African-American children.

The Field Experiment

The project operated on an uneven trajectory over its two-year course. Curiously, two medical metaphors, infusion and inoculation, constituted the working vocabulary for the education program's operation and objectives. In reality we fell far short of such medical precision. The first year was a planning, design, and trial implementation stage.

The second year was a modified implementation building upon the trial experience. Children and staff were interviewed at the end of each year, and our participant observation proceeded throughout the two years.

Location

The program site was a few blocks from the precipitating point of a major urban riot of the 1960s. Since then the neighborhood has declined four-fold in population density, and many of the burned-out stores and residences have yet to be replaced. Many of its former residents have climbed into middle class status in adjoining suburbs. The remaining residents are a blend of single-parent underclass families living in detached public housing, recently released or recovering men living in one of several halfway houses, and a small group of middle class adult professionals attracted to government-subsidized construction of comfortable town housing.

Situated in this neighborhood, one of the attractions of our program was the warmth, familiarity, and feeling of permanency conveyed by the aging building out of which our program operated. Originally the local library in a once prosperous neighborhood, the building had been sold at nominal cost shortly after the riots to a local community organization. The quality of its volunteer maintenance over the years has varied, yet the building endures as a monument to the past glory and future potential of the area. The vaulted ceilings and three large rooms on the first floor and the cavernous basement provide plenty of program space and ample freedom of movement for roaming children. By contrast, few of the neighborhood children in this program expressed any sense of permanent attachment to the addresses listed on their registration forms and the implied living arrangements at that site. Parenting responsibilities for them were routinely shared by adult relatives in several locations.

Center Organization

Successful delivery of a program hinges as much on issues of organizational effectiveness as it does on program impact. In the manner of polite guests, we sought to remove ourselves from ongoing conflict and policy debates at the Center and, as much as possible, to feign ignorance of them. Our guiding belief was that this strategy would minimize the impact of these organizational issues on the operation of our program. The

major weakness of this strategy stemmed from the fact that, by prior agreement, the volunteer instructors in our program were selected and supervised by the Center's instructional program coordinator. Although they did receive small stipends from us in recognition of their service, their commitment as volunteers depended heavily on their loyalty to the coordinator. Staff turnover became a function of waxing and waning loyalty to the coordinator, where this loyalty was heavily based on agreement over the larger policy issues at the Center. Consequently, even though the coordinator was careful to select competent and responsible instructors, she often had difficulty maintaining their commitment to the program in large part due to continuing policy debates at the Center.

The location selected was but one of several possible implementation sites for this type of supplementary education program. We could have performed a much cleaner and more controlled field experiment if we had rented space in an organizationally-stable venue and if we had selected and supervised the instructional staff directly. Having failed to do so thus clouds the interpretation of our findings on the viability of the program treatment. However, what we lost in internal validity we gained in external validity, as this site and these volunteers are more typical of the actual community locations available.

Student Recruitment

The original target population consisted of students who attended grades four through six at the public school two blocks from the center and who lived in the neighborhood. The assistant coordinator for the program, a local resident who himself was a graduate of this school some twenty years earlier, visited each classroom at the school, explained the program, and distributed application forms to be taken home and completed by a parent or guardian. Many students either were not interested in a structured Saturday morning experience or already had commitments to another program, and a few interested students did not get parental permission. Reasons for parental reluctance included the need to have the child at home for baby-sitting or weekly chores and the concern that the program instructors might be too radical and would challenge their child's religious training and beliefs. Students who did receive permission came with enthusiasm, often bringing a sibling along as well.

A smaller number of students came from suburban families who were paid members of the center, and there were also a few students from the school who lived outside the neighborhood and were driven to the center by their parents, having been bused to the school during the week as part of the school system's desegregation plan. In the second year of the program, students from the school's new kindergarten program also were permitted to apply, and a number of them attended. The program had resources for a maximum of 50 students and, although about this many were registered each year, attendance varied from week to week, averaging 30 on any given Saturday.

Curriculum and Staff

The basic formal curriculum consisted of an extensive collection of African-American heritage materials developed jointly by a group of consultants and educators from the multicultural education department of the Portland Public Schools (Leonard, ed., 1988). These included lengthy background essays for social studies, language arts, music, math, and science in combination with sample lesson plans graded K-6 for each of these subject areas. What was most significant about this curriculum was that it defined and legitimated the prevailing Afrocentric ethos of the center and its African-American staff.

The materials introduced students to the information supporting claims to the African origins of civilization and the assertion that "Egypt was, and still is, a significant African Civilization" (Portland Public Schools, 1989). This curriculum emphasis on African heritage and history that preceded European colonialism, American slavery and the civil rights struggle was designed to reinforce thematic arguments about the cultural unity of African people, the survival of this culture in America despite slavery, the significance of these cultural contributions for humanity, African people's record of resistance to subjugation, and the victimization caused by distortions and misinformation about the African/African-American heritage.

The school coordinator selected for the program only persons who professed beliefs consistent with these principles. Any staff who subsequently doubted or challenged the basic guiding principles of this curriculum tended to have a term of short duration with the program. In any event, since only limited training was provided in the use of these materials, some staff adhered more rigorously to this content than others, irrespective of

their underlying convictions. In practice, what was taught was a blend of these materials and lessons from the highly varied teaching experiences of each staff member, who ranged from college student volunteers to fully certified teachers either currently active or retired.

The typical weekly three-hour session began with a half-hour assembly program for all children. Either an outside presenter or a member of the center staff shared his or her expertise on a particular issue of African-American heritage. Then the children split into age groups for an appropriate age-graded history lesson. More often than not, the topic dealt with ancient African civilization and the cultural contributions of early Egypt. Usually this was followed by an arts and crafts lesson, with projects ranging from sugar cube pyramids to traditional African tribal masks. During this time a volunteer with a special interest in hieroglyphics rotated across the age groups and gave the children some experience in the use and understanding of these symbols. The groups were then served a snack. Although the preferred foods were the universal children's favorites such as peanut butter sandwiches, chips, and juice, the catering staff attempted on occasion to introduce the children to either "healthy" foods such as fresh vegetables (with dip) or traditional African delicacies such as bean cakes and jolof rice.

The final session was a 45-minute lesson either in African dance and drumming or in creative writing. Despite the greater popularity of the former activity, staff sent older students with special writing talents or underachieving students who could benefit from tutorial assistance and motivational support to the creative writing instructor. In keeping with the philosophy of supplementary education, however, note that this session was treated as creative writing rather than remedial tutoring.

Infusion and Inoculation

Two broad goals of the project, infusion and inoculation, provided a vocabulary for joint action. The advantage of their ambiguity was that they provided the researchers, external consultants, and center directors some metaphorical distance and common bond to our joint but often disparate efforts. When more precisely defined, they provided the additional comfort of being beyond the evaluative reach of the researchers and the program control of the center staff. Nevertheless, they were, in theory, goals that helped give direction to the project and so bear some brief mention.

Infusion refers to the goal of diffusing the African heritage curriculum offered in this supplementary education program back into the classrooms of the children's regular school. Originally we worked with the principal on a strategy for getting the teachers personally committed to the supplementary program. We wanted the teachers to help design the curriculum, or at least help select the existing lesson plans that they considered appropriate for their students and that could be further developed in their own classroom instruction. We even had hopes that some of the teachers would volunteer an occasional Saturday morning in order to help staff the program.

In order to introduce the teachers to these goals, the school principal held one of the mandatory, monthly after-school teacher's meetings at the center, two blocks from the school. The teachers were receptive and interested, even if somewhat tired and unresponsive at this time of day. Unfortunately we failed to seek the advance cooperation of the school's union steward. Even though she expressed an inherent interest in our program (her parents had been Garveyites), to her the proper fulfillment of her union role meant giving an adversarial interpretation to our program as another effort by the principal to get uncompensated labor from her staff. She recommended against participation. The opportunity to get state-approved, continuing education credit units was an insufficient tangible return for their extra time. Consequently only about one-third of the eligible teachers returned for the two follow-up workshops, one held after school in the cafeteria and the other at the center on a regularly scheduled inservice professional day for the teachers.

The back-up strategy for infusion was to use the participating children themselves. They were asked to share their new knowledge in their regular classrooms, and the principal was asked to alert her teachers to this new possibility. Informally we learned that some of this did occur, although how much and to what effect on the other students was unknown. Some indirect evidence of a positive infusion effect was the increased status in the school enjoyed by the participating students. Center certificates and participation T-shirts were awarded as part of the school's regular honors assembly, and the Saturday school students received long applause.

The goal of inoculation symbolized the belief that a community-based, adult-supervised program could give preadolescent children character training that could help prevent the subsequent negative influence of their neighborhood adolescent street culture. Stronger, more positive ethnic and student identities, coupled with ongoing opportunities to enact these identities, would permit these youth to forego the peer-directed street culture that usually leads a high proportion of these "at-risk" children into various forms of adolescent and adult delinquency.

Evaluation

Design

The limited time frame of our research design permitted no direct assessment of any long-term infusion or inoculation effects. Instead we focused on five measurable short-term outcomes—new knowledge of Africa (measured both years), attitudes about Africa (first year), attitudes about African curriculum content in the regular school (second year), self-image (first year), and academic achievement (second year). Students were interviewed by members of the research team at the end of each year's session. A total of 67 interviews were conducted, including 36 after the first year and 31 after the second. All children except five in the first year sample were African-American.

Each sample included a control group of 10 nonparticipating students from the same school and classrooms as the target population of participating students. As a partial check for selectivity bias, the control students were selected from among students who were identified by their teachers as having a positive interest in the program but who had been unable to participate because of prior commitments. As a further check the analysis plan for year one included a variable measuring involvement in other Saturday activities.

Year One

Variables. The main independent variable entered into the linear regression equation was the amount of exposure to the program, measured by the number of Saturdays attended. Two primary control variables were the number of other Saturday activities customarily engaged in and school achievement test scores (average percentile score on

the math and reading components of the California achievement test administered that year). Included in the equation as secondary controls were measures of four status characteristics that could affect how the children responded to the program—school grade level (four, five, or six), female gender (53 percent of the sample), enrollment in a suburban school instead of the neighborhood target school (22 percent), and African-American ethnic background (14 percent were not). The suburban enrollment variable also served as a proxy measure for social class. Although entering seven variables into the equation is a large number with such a small sample, their collinearity was minimal and the equation yielded stable estimates in spite of the limited degrees of freedom available.

The knowledge of Africa measure was a ten-item test geared to the learning objectives of the Saturday school's history curriculum. It had an alpha reliability of .807. Half the items were about ancient Egypt, the other half primarily on modern African geography. The children's attitude toward Africa was measured with a three-level (positive, neutral, or negative) global rating of open-ended responses to the question, "what can you tell me about Africa?" A sample positive responses was "It's where we originated." "it's the beginnings of civilization." "Many inventions came from Africa." Sample negative response: "Some people die there." "There's no food to eat. There's a lot of bugs there. That's about all."

Self-image was measured with 21 items from Dickstein's (1972) measure of children's self-esteem. For the administration of these items interviewers who were matched by race to the children collected the children's self-assessments on each item using a five-point response scale. Consistent with more recent applications by Harter (1982, 1985) and Pallas et al. (1990), an exploratory factor analysis (principal components with varimax rotation) of these items yielded three subscales that used 12 of the items. Being responsible (5 items, alpha reliability .770) was based on self-assessments of how they are at being polite, obeying rules, being honest, being able to take care of yourself, and being a good student. Being smart (3 items, alpha reliability .686) was based on self-assessments of how they are at learning new things quickly, reading, and writing. Being athletic (4 items, alpha reliability .833) was based on self-assessments of how they are at being good at sports, playing ball, being strong, and doing gymnastics.

Results. Saturday school participation did have a strong positive effect on both the children's knowledge and attitudes toward Africa ($p<.01$, Table 1). This was not surprising, since their neighborhood school as yet had no formal curriculum on Africa, and what little was taught by individual teachers often simply reinforced negative stereotypes about the pervasiveness of primitive tribal life. The standard Black History Month curriculum studied only African American historical figures and the civil rights struggle.

The newness of this African material to the children's overall learning experiences is further supported by our findings that the knowledge and attitude scores were unaffected by school achievement level, participation in other Saturday activities, attendance at a suburban school, or gender. Students in the higher elementary school grades did get a higher knowledge score ($p<.05$), but this was related to their receiving more advanced instruction at the center. One noteworthy finding suggested about the present deficit in the appreciation of African culture by the target population is that the few children in the sample who were not African-American tended to have a more positive attitude about Africa ($p<.10$) than did the African-American children. These few children exemplify the possibility for multicultural understanding when parents consciously encourage it, as did the parents who placed their children in this program.

The knowledge the children gained of African heritage had no immediate impact on any of the three dimensions of self-image measured, most notably on the ratings of smartness where effects were hypothesized. The children's self-evaluations on the three dimensions measured were unrelated to their Saturday school attendance. In general the children gave high self-evaluations regardless of their level of participation in this supplementary education program.

Table 1

Standardized Regression Coefficients for School Children's Awareness of Africa and Evaluations of Self, Year One Evaluation

Explanatory Variables	Awareness of Africa		Evaluations of Self		
	Afr. Knowl.	Pro-Afr. Att.	Resp.	Smart	Athletic
Attend Sat. Sch.	.640***	.668***	.017	.028	.085
Attend Other Act.	.082	.081	-.013	.266	.482***
Acad. Achiev.	.156	-.127	.561**	.406**	-.019
Grade	.333**	.073	.041	.393**	.092
Female	-.037	.027	-.037	-.335	-.383*
Suburban School	.009	-.024	-.362*	-.352*	-.007
African Amer.	-.270	-.365*	.418*	.266	.149
Adj. R^2	.561	.283	.178	.175	.246
F	7.39***	2.98**	2.08*	2.06*	2.64**
N	36	36	36	36	36

* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$
*** $p < .01$

By contrast, there were significant effects on self-image from the other explanatory variables, each of which taps longer-term involvements and activities beyond this trial program. Self-assessments of athleticism were more positive the higher the number of other Saturday activities they reported ($p<.01$), many of which were athletic in nature. Boys also rated themselves higher than girls ($p<.10$) on this dimension, consistent with previous findings (Pallas, et al., 1990). Self-assessments of smartness and responsibility were both positively related to regular school academic performance ($p<.05$), as measured by achievement test scores, and were negatively related to being from a suburban school ($p<.10$). These findings are also consistent with earlier research using larger samples of children (reviewed in Rosenberg, 1979). In addition, assessments of smartness increased with grade level ($p<.05$), and assessments of responsibility increased with being African American ($p<.10$).

Year Two

Variables. The principal new outcome assessed was the children's preference for a more African-centered curriculum in their regular schooling. Preference for an African curriculum was measured with 14 forced-choice items, each choice consisting of a topic for possible study which was either African or African-American in focus versus European or non-African American. The alpha reliability coefficient for this scale was .765. Children were then asked if they knew something about each topic, and the total number of yeses for the African/African American topics comprised a second scale, African knowledge level. Its alpha was .842. The other outcome variables were reading and math achievement scores, using the annual spring-administered California Achievement Test. Since this test was taken after the fall, winter, and half of the spring Saturday school sessions had been completed, it was appropriate in the second-year analysis to treat these scores as outcome measures.

The main independent variable again was attendance level, coded this time to "0" for the control group of non-attenders, "1" for the sporadic attenders, and "2" for the regular attenders. Grade level was dichotomized to separate the kindergarten children (one-fourth of the sample) from the elementary grade children. Three other dichotomous variables were gender, liking for school, and the race of each child's interviewer.

For this second evaluation we varied the race of the interviewer purposely. Whenever a set of interview questions have high demand content (Orne, 1962), the responses given often are dictated by wanting to be in accord with the perceived preferences of the interviewer rather than the respondents' own preferences. Given the high demand content of the curriculum preference questions, we wanted to include the race of the interviewer in our analysis not only as a methodological control for this potential source of bias, but also to explore an interesting substantive issue. If we were to find that the children were influenced by their racially stereotyped perceptions of the interviewers' preferences, it follows that they could very well react the same way in the classroom. Unless corrected for by appropriate teaching methodology, a positive interest in Africa generated by the new curriculum materials could be partially suppressed by the students' stereotypic perceptions that only African American instructors have these preferences.

Results. As in the first-year group, attending the second-year program did increase the children's self-reported knowledge of Africa ($p<.01$, Table 2). The program also increased their preference for more African content in the school curriculum ($p<.05$). Students attending the program also scored moderately higher (significant at $p<.15$) on the California reading achievement test, although they scored the same on the math test. One can only speculate about the extent to which these effects might have been stronger if these materials had in fact been infused directly into the classroom curriculum as well.

With regard to the other independent variables, grade level increased both the children's knowledge and preference for African content ($p<.01$). Interestingly, having an African-American interviewer increased preferences for African curriculum content more strongly than any other variable in the equation. This variable had no effect on their self-reported knowledge of these African topics, however. Gender and reported liking for school were unrelated to all four outcome measures.

We conclude from these evaluation findings that the program achieved its immediate goals of making the children more aware of African culture, making them feel more positive about this culture, and increasing their interest in learning about it in their regular classroom. The evidence on whether or not program participation boosted school

Table 2

Standardized Regression Coefficients for School Children's Awareness of Africa and Academic Achievement, Year Two Evaluation

Explanatory Variables	Awareness of Africa		Achievement Scores	
	Afr. Knowl.	Curric. Pref.	Reading	Math
Attend Sat. Sch.	.610***	.341**	.343*	.171
Like School	.023	.001	-.014	.173
Grade	.680***	.460***	----	----
Female	-.154	-.136	.070	.246
Afr. Amer. Inter.	-.117	.591***	----	----
Adj. R^2	.457	.429	.000	.001
F	6.04***	5.52***	0.86	1.00
N	31	31	23	23

* p <.15
** p <.05
*** p <.01

achievement, although suggestive, was insufficient to draw any safe conclusions. Self-evaluations of competence in the student role identity remained the same after the first year, and instead were primarily a function of past academic performance in the regular school classroom. We can again speculate that the outcome might have been otherwise if these materials had also been used in the regular classroom.

Discussion

Do these results permit us to judge that the program accomplished its objectives? More generally, what does this experience tell us about the viability of Saturday supplementary programs for improving the regular educational performance of at-risk children? Did the program operate on the children via any of the three hypothesized mechanisms for improving regular classroom performance—ethnic identity, student role identity, academic interest?

Ethnic Identity

Our principal finding is at once obvious and fundamental in its implications for the development of an altered ethnic identity that could affect educational achievement. Attending the program did increase the children's knowledge of African culture. It increased their positive feelings toward this culture, and it made them want to study it more in their public school classrooms.

It is not our intention here to pass judgment on whether the particular version of culture offered was correct; our interest rather was to assess and understand its impact. The curriculum used, with its primary emphasis on ancient Egyptian civilization, in fact stressed African cultural superiority. Such cultural chauvinism, even though experienced in reverse almost daily, was a novel experience for these children and it did hold their attention, even that of several boys who were notorious for their poor attention span in the regular school classrooms.

Potentially such knowledge provides the cognitive material for an ethnic self-awareness in childhood quite different from the lingering assertions of mental inferiority and other ideological remnants from slavery. It gives legitimacy to one form of African

ethnocentrism, better known as Afrocentrism, alternatively as Africentrism (Banks, 1992). At the same time it is unlikely that this Saturday program alone provided these children sufficient content mastery for them to be able to defend their new knowledge against the inevitable challenges from the competing cultures of more conventional learning circles. Perhaps this is the ultimate fate of all cultural chauvinisms in American society. In a multicultural society that strives toward a greater measure of unranked ethnic pluralism, each ethnic group must develop some self-professed legitimate claims to its superiority if its heritage is to survive and provide a basis for an enduring ethnic identity. Rarely, however, will any such consciously fostered American ethnic identity have a "primordial" influence over its holders' lives in the manner of traditional ethnic societies (Geertz, 1963) or first-generation American immigrant enclaves (Gans, 1979). Our premise rather is that in the continually-developing richness of American pluralistic culture, ethnicity is likely to remain a key organizing characteristic. If all children are to become fully participating partners in this pluralism, then learning cultural content for the ethnic identity to be claimed for oneself is an important outcome from schooling in itself. Our findings support the conclusion that supplementary education can promote this outcome, as well as increase interest for more of this instruction in the regular classroom.

Student Role Identity

By contrast, the findings are inconclusive as to whether this kind of program can strengthen the student-role identity, a key social psychological mediating variable for school achievement. Our principal finding on this point was negative—attending the program did not measurably alter the children's evaluations of their responsibility or smartness, the two primary dimensions of the student identity.

Both of these self-evaluations were instead related to one's prior record of academic performance, as measured by achievement test scores. Experientially each child's Saturday school participation was only a small blip in his or her total stream of childhood activities, and so even if the learning that took place there was relevant to the student identity, it is unlikely within the span of this study that it could show much impact. What is noteworthy is that ongoing participation in other Saturday activities, many of which were athletic in nature, did increase self-evaluations of athleticism. It is therefore

reasonable that more regular opportunities for participation in voluntary supplementary education, such as the present program, could similarly increase self-evaluations of student role identities.

Children's self-evaluations are a combined product of the reflected appraisals from significant others and social comparisons with similar others (Rosenberg, 1979). Thus the potential of this program for strengthening the student role identity depends heavily on the impact of a new set of significant others and comparison others. Typically, beyond family members it is coaches and teammates who are pivotal for self-assessments of athleticism, teachers and classmates for self-assessments of smartness and responsibility. The Saturday school was staffed primarily by suburban, middle class African American adults and college students. Although the duration of contact was certainly less than with the adults in their normal school and family environment, their impact was heightened by an average adult volunteer/child ratio of 1:4, which for some was lower than what they experienced in their homes. This interactive instruction from respected middle class adults occurred in a voluntary, nurturant setting where social control for the most part was not one of the necessary tasks of these adults. Furthermore, given that the age-grading also was much looser than in the regular classroom, variations in performance level were less likely to invoke negative social comparisons and more likely to be considered a normal aspect of maturational differences in children. On the other hand, there were also fewer opportunities for unambiguous positive social comparisons, and the absence of any planned closure in most of this loosely-organized, volunteer-led instruction reduced opportunities for developing a sense of task mastery.

Academic Interest

This third hypothesized mechanism by which supplementary education could raise school performance was more dependent than the other two on follow-through changes in the regular school classroom. New subject matter interest aroused on Saturday was to provide the foundation for more intensive study during the week. Unfortunately, as previously explained, the regular school teachers did not buy into the project as had been hoped, and so whatever new interest was aroused on Saturdays operated only to the extent that it transferred to related topics in their current study lessons. Thus although our

second year evaluation showed that attendance strongly increased interest in learning more about African culture, this new interest was not met in the classroom. Not only were most teachers unprepared to teach African culture, few of them felt this Saturday-piqued interest was broadly shared by their other children.

A related point is the caution with which these children expressed their interest in learning more African culture. They were substantially more expressive of this preference when the interviewer was African American. They suppressed this preference when responding to the white interviewer, as if confirming the concerns of those parents who had chosen not to enroll their children in the program because they believed the curriculum content was too provocative.

Conclusion

In the larger scheme of American nation-building, an African-centered ethnic identity is an essential component in the achievement of the American multiculture. A good indication of the acceptance and stabilization of this emerging African-American ethnic identity will be that time when children can freely express this identity preference without regard to the ethnicity of their audience. At the present time, however, the power of this identity to help assure educational survival in high-risk African-American youth must not be overstated. In this experimental program with preadolescent children we can offer no hard evidence of its accomplishment. Instead, through internal analysis and interpretation of our data and observations, we have proposed three viable mechanisms and associated contingencies through which ethnic identity can work toward this goal—as an educational outcome in itself, as a means for building a student role identity, and as a means for generating academic interest.

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